



November 2006
FLSA: NON-EXEMPT

HEAD ZOOKEEPER/VETERINARY TECHNICIAN

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, provides lead direction to assigned zookeeper personnel; sets priorities and directs the work of assigned staff on a project or day-to-day basis; performs routine to complex work related to the care of animals at the City Zoo, as well as upkeep and maintenance of Zoo facilities; performs routine medical care for Zoo animals; and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises supervision and training over assigned staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the working supervisory class in the City Zoo that performs a range of routine and complex animal care duties, supervises, reviews, assigns, and participates in the daily operations, functions, and activities of the care and management of zoo animals, performs routine medical care of zoo animals, and coordinates the veterinary program under the direction of the veterinarian. This class is distinguished from the Zoo Manager in that the latter has overall program, budgetary and administrative responsibility for the Zoo.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

Management reserves the right to add, modify, change or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.

- Provides supervision and training to assigned zookeeper staff; reviews and controls quality of work; assists in completing employee evaluations; participates in performing routine maintenance and repair work.
- Plans, schedules, prioritizes and assigns animal care work in consultation with the Zoo Manager; communicates status of Zoo operations to appropriate personnel, working cooperatively to schedule activities in accordance with established priorities and special operational priorities; instructs staff in work procedures.
- Assists the Zoo Manager with animal management, collection, planning, and operations.
- Trains employees in work methods, use of tools and equipment, and relevant safety precautions.
- Assists in developing work plans, procedures, and schedules.
- Orders supplies and equipment for work projects; maintains records of purchase orders; may assist in developing budget figures for division.
- Provides technical and medical support and assistance in the care and treatment of zoo animals, including preparing animals for surgery, administering injections, performing laboratory tests, collections and specimens, maintaining veterinary records, supplies, and equipment, and assisting with routine health care procedures, immobilizations, surgeries, treatments and radiology.

- Prepares and verifies appropriate diet for each animal, including adding necessary supplements, feeding and providing fresh water, and ordering and storing fresh produce.
- Observes and cares for animal collection, including checking animal health and consumption activities, cleaning and sanitizing animal enclosures, and reporting any abnormal activities to supervisor and entering information into daily records.
- Observes sick, quarantined, and potentially injured animals; examines eyes, ears, skin, teeth, takes and analyzes stool samples; medicates and vaccinates animals as appropriate or refers to a veterinary doctor.
- Orders animal food, and medical supplies.
- Performs general janitorial grounds and building duties, including cleaning drains and pump filters in addition to providing services for light construction, facility maintenance, and repair.
- Participates in the performance of transport and veterinarian procedures, including helping administer medication, and restraining and capturing animals for transport or examinations.
- Provides educational information to the visiting public, including providing general information about Zoo operations and facilities, explaining animal behavior and care, and answering questions from the public and other Zoo personnel;
- Attends meetings, conferences, workshops, and training sessions and reviews publications and audio-visual materials to become and remain current on principles, practices, and new developments in assigned work areas.
- Maintains a variety of records including animal health records and records on treatments, surgery, vaccinations, and other medical procedures; inputs such information into the appropriate record keeping system.
- Takes, reviews and keeps any necessary medical notes, behavioral notes and animal owner notes regarding animals.
- Works with volunteer staff; provides supervision, information and instructions.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Basic principles of supervision and training.
- Methods and techniques of handling and caring for a variety of animals in various conditions.
- Principles and practices of medical care and treatment of animals.
- Principles of animal husbandry, including normal behavior and dietary care, wild animal behavior, care, and feeding procedures, animal flight distances and aggressive behavior indicators, and signs of illness of animals.
- Plant taxonomy in order to recognize toxic and non-toxic plant species.
- Methods and procedures of Zoo facilities cleaning and maintenance.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, codes and regulations concerning the operation of the City Zoo, including current standards of the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums.
- Occupational hazards and standard safety practices necessary in the area of Zoo services.
- Basic computer applications related to the work.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for dealing effectively with the public and City staff, in person and over the telephone.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service to public and City staff, in person and over the telephone.

Ability to:

- Plan, schedule, assign, and oversee activities of zookeeper personnel.

- Inspect the work of others and maintain established quality control standards.
- Train others in proper and safe work procedures.
- Identify and implement effective course of action to complete assigned work.
- Oversee and participate in animal care and facilities maintenance and related projects.
- Respond to requests and inquiries for information regarding Zoo services.
- Understand, and interpret rules and regulations governing the intake, care, release, and transportation of animals.
- Recognize normal and abnormal animal behavior.
- Handle potentially dangerous animals in a safe and efficient manner.
- Administer injections and medications to all types of animals.
- Provide post-operative care, wound care, bandaging, cleaning, monitoring, and evaluation of animals.
- Access, retrieve, enter, and update information using a computer terminal.
- Meet and deal tactfully and effectively with the public.
- Effectively represent the City at the Zoo.
- Estimate needed materials and labor and secure sufficient quantities.
- Practice safe work habits; train others in proper and safe work procedures.
- Follow division policies and procedures related to assigned duties.
- Prepare and maintain records and prepare work and time reports in assigned areas.
- Organize own work, set priorities and meet critical time deadlines.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence and independent judgment within general policy and legal guidelines.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in zoology, biology, natural sciences, or a related field, three (3) years of experience in working with animals within a zoo operation, a wild animal park, animal care, or other animal facility, and one (1) year of experience as a veterinary technician.

License:

- Valid California class C driver's license with satisfactory driving record.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, as well as in a Zoo environment, and to inspect various animal care sites and habitats, including traversing uneven terrain, climbing ladders, stairs and other access points; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various City and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. This is primarily field classification and standing in and walking between work areas may be required. Wrist flexion and lateral rotation are necessary in combination with grasping to handle tools and equipment. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter and retrieve data using a computer keyboard, typewriter keyboard or calculator and to operate various hand and power tools and maintenance equipment. Positions in this classification frequently bend, stoop, kneel, and reach to perform work; push and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials, objects, and animals necessary to perform job functions.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Employees primarily work primarily outside in the animal care sites and habitats and may be exposed to potentially infectious diseases, inclement weather conditions, and hazardous physical substances. May involve exposure to dangerous and/or diseased animals, and animals known to cause allergies. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures. This position will be around animals known to cause allergies.

WORKING CONDITIONS

May be required to work on evenings, weekends and holidays.